

GRAPEVINE

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Called to Grow

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."

John 15:16 NIVUK

Dear friends,

Every church in Rochester Diocese has been asked to carry out a "Called to Grow" plan. Those of us in home-groups may well have begun the first steps. Our "called to grow" enabler Abi Hiscock has chosen us as one of the first churches in our Deanery to complete this process. We are in a good position to do this as we are used to such exercises!

Step 1 is to look at "who are we" both as a church and as a community. This is the process begun at home-group

level. I encourage you to participate – and to pray the prayer: "Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people and kindle in us the fire of your love."



Step 2 ("What does this mean") will involve a small group sifting through the findings – if you would like to be part of this group please let me know –

preferably by email (vicar@stjohnswelling.org.uk). I will be approaching some people!

Step 3 ("What now") will be the discerning of priorities for the future – what do we need to be as church within our community. We hope to find 3-5 priorities. Step 4 believe it or not ("Let's do it") is to focus on achieving those priorities (Step 5 is "What has happened?").

I suspect (not wishing to prejudge) that one of our priorities will be the hall project which is desperately needed!

I would love us to consider how we can partner with St John's Erith to help them in their planning and eventually in their execution of that plan. I am to be licensed as Priest in Charge there on the 2nd of Feb to help them to grow (it will be their 900th year next year). Don't worry, I'm not leaving SJ Welling! God bless you

Adam

St John's News

We always know Christmas is on the horizon when the **Lamplighter Christmas Fayre** takes place as Father Christmas makes an early appearance and decorations festoon the hall! This year's Fayre raised over £2,500 for the Leprosy Mission, fantastic!

I suspect for many of us **December** is a blur of business in every part of our lives: home, community and Church, as we planned, enabled and enjoyed celebrations. Many of us from St John's helped **post Christmas cards** through every door in our Parish. **The Church building** was the venue for four local schools to have their carol services, each group celebrating in one way or another. We shared the awesome truth of Christmas in word, music and visually, with

many visitors who came to **special Christmas services and events** starting with the **TOFFS carol service** in early December right through till the **Crib Service**, and **Midnight service** on Christmas Eve and **Christmas Morning worship**, and it was all so good.

Picking out a personal highlight is difficult. Maybe for me that beautiful moment when the Christingles were lit, the electric lights put out and Alison Read led us in praying to Jesus the Light of the World.

Spring Alpha has just started with a lovely group of people meeting to explore faith in Jesus.

Personal News has been the other main aspect of the last weeks.

We celebrated **Pat Wootton's 80th** Sunday Birthday with flowers and the congregation singing Happy Birthday to her.

On Jan 19th We welcomed **Baby Reynold** into our church family.

We have grieved and supported **Julie Stedman** in the death of her Mum, and our family has experienced your gracious support on the death of **Denise** and we thank you so much. Many people have said how hard to lose someone near Christmas, and yet because **HE** came down to earth from Heaven we have confidence that we can go from earth to Heaven and we **know** Denise has.

We have just learnt that two lovely ex-members of our Congregation are now worshipping in Heaven, **Sue Meredith** who was a Lay Reader until she and Tony moved to Greatstone, and **Avis Barnes** who was one of the Playgroup team some years ago and until recently a regular member of the evening congregation with her husband Michael. From personal experience their families will so value our prayers.

But we continue to live and work here!

Estelle Woodcock

Mental health in Christianity:

Our method at Cornerstone for dealing with mental health issues through Christ



Is science or medicine wrong? Absolutely not, but neither is complete. Am I just a psychological being, am I just a physical being, am I just a spiritual being, or am I all three? Science and medicine are not wrong, but this secular model is incomplete in how it views the human experience. Drugs on their own (a treatment situation which has improved), or sometimes at all, as a response to mental ill health, do not always reflect the triune nature of humanity.

We are not just psychological and physical beings, but also spiritual. It must be understood that we are always physical, always psychological, and always spiritual every second of every day. Some strands of Christianity make this same mistake separating our earthly bodies from our spiritual natures. The Bible does not, and God does not. We were created to be all three always.

Whereas some in the medical world might see only a psychological and/or physical problem, some Christians might see a spiritual problem only. Neither is correct because neither considers the whole of our existence as humans. And this is the core of Christian recovery. We are always all three but that is not our identity. My identity is in Christ alone. I am not someone who is mentally, physically or spiritually unwell who is also Christian. I am a Christian who has to deal with their illness, whether mental, spiritual or physical, through Christ. How? By identifying in Him and his promises.

I am not just my illness, my sexuality, my thoughts, my feelings, I am all these things but only in obedience to Christ and through Christ. That is freedom, restoration, recovery.

Ian Moody



For the last term we have been learning about God and Christian persecution through Open Doors 'World Watch List'. The Open Doors World Watch List is an annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. North Korea is number one for the 18th year in a row.

We found out that persecution is rising. Over 4,305 Christians were killed because of their beliefs in 2018. People kill you because of your faith or belief, which shouldn't happen because everyone has their own beliefs. Essentially, it's hell on earth for Christians because they are being killed for what they believe and support.

We were shocked to find out that 100 girls were taken from their school and imprisoned and 99 were eventually returned but the one girl left over is still imprisoned because

Jobs Column: Joseph Adedayo

I was so fascinated in Joseph's personal as well as work life, that I have included much of it here for you.

Joseph was born into a family of 17 children in Nigeria in 1944. He was the oldest of 4 siblings of his Dad's first wife, losing his next sibling down, a full sister. His Dad had 4 further wives (concurrently), the last one of which succeeded him but had no children of her own. Being a Muslim at that time in Nigeria, his Dad was allowed to marry more than once.

Joseph attended a local primary boarding school and had the best education. He was a prefect, and his love of science stemmed from there. The school was Roman Catholic, and this was where he became acquainted with the Christian faith. During his junior school years, at his request and in se-



crecy from his family and with no godparents, he was baptised, choosing for himself the name Joseph. When his father found out, he was twice locked up at home for a month but his faith persisted.

His Dad really believed in education, for which Joseph is very grateful, and he was sent to attend a Moslem secondary school, though he didn't know how to read the Qu'ran. His Dad wanted to erase Joseph's Christian faith, but he kept quiet and didn't go Church again until he'd left school at 18 (1962). (His 3rd sibling, another sister, is the only other one who left Nigeria. She is also a Christian, having attended a Methodist secondary school, and now lives in Canada.) He got good qualifications, his Dad pressing for international external school exams because of the corruption in Nigeria and to give credence to his ability.

Joe's first job after school was in the Office of Statistics, but Nigeria was short of veterinary surgeons

she will not renounce God; she will not turn her back on God.

We played a game where we were given scenarios like the persecuted Christians would face and choose whether we would have faith or fear.

We added flags to the countries on the 'World Watch List' that we decided to pray for that evening, which is now on the board at the back of church.



Open Doors
Serving persecuted Christians worldwide



We enjoyed spending time with our youth leaders, looking at the map and praying for countries. It was definitely beneficial and helped our understanding. We liked learning about what happens to people in the persecuted countries.

Even if we don't talk specifically about God we can talk about things that God can help with. Seeing the prayers work will give us more faith in God.

God we pray for protection of persecuted Christians and that even when imprisoned Christians will know God's love and presence. Amen.

**By the boys of
Kingdom Builders
(Age ranges from 8-14)**

so he applied to Minnesota to train thus in 1969 (age 25). Joe's dad was very fearful of the gun culture in America so Joe was to train in a modular fashion which would take longer to finish. However he had a stopover in England to visit a distant aunt, who invited him to stay here and train, where he could finish the initial training in 3 years. He changed course, applied to university in Liverpool and read Industrial Chemistry, which he finished in 5 years including 2 sandwich years in industry (1974). He remained in the UK, and first worked at Albright Wilsons, then at Cross and Blackwell, both as an Analytical Chemist, undertaking analysis of chemicals in foodstuffs, both raw and finished. He progressed to leading teams of such analysis until 1982 when he changed career into teaching Chemistry in Further Education in South London, when the ILEA was recruiting new staff under their equal opportunities policy. Joe had a relevant degree and a great deal of experience in lots of techniques including MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging). He completed FE (Further Education) teacher training with a PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education) while teaching.

The 'Ade' in Adedayo means 'Royal home'.

Joe's family was the royal one in his clan. His grandfather was the Clan Chief, which passed to his uncle, and then in 1976 his uncle died, and Joe returned to Nigeria to visit. The new Chief is not chosen by seniority or succession, but is chosen by a community committee, and Joe was the one chosen. It was recognised that he was well educated, he would defend and help the family, and help the community. Since 1976 he has travelled for as much as he could of the year, taking unpaid leave when necessary, to visit and care for his family and community. He loved his second career in teaching, which he could sustain better with travelling to Nigeria, until 2005 when he retired at 60, citing his international responsibility as the main reason. He still travels widely for much of the year, mainly in Africa, the Middle East and Europe visiting and checking on family, as he has the senior responsibility for them. He also stays in the Nigerian community for which he's responsible, including looking after property, the village bore hole, etc.

Joseph was married to Rosalind, also UK Nigerian, and they have two daughters. Sadly Rosalind died due to complications during the pregnancy of their third child, a

boy, in her 30's. It was following this that Joe began teaching. He remarried Tunde (pron. 'Toondi') and had 2 sons. Joe now lives on his own, and all his children live in the UK. One of his daughters is also a teacher, of languages (English, French and German). He has also been both a school and college governor, which perhaps reflects his commitment to education learnt from his father. Would he ever have considered returning to live in Nigeria full-time? No, he considered doing that when he became chief in 1976, but it would have meant uprooting his children, and he wouldn't do it.

Joe's career advice: If you love doing something, you will work hard to overcome the obstacles and difficulties to follow it. "God's hand has been in everything in my life, including leaving Nigeria."

Six months of every year Joe spends travelling, 11 months in 2018, so what does he do while in the UK (apart from seeing his 4 children and 4 grandchildren)? He visits the library and reads every day, listens to the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4, and, in his own words, says: "My Time is with God".

Kate Foot

St John's Bowls Club

Hi Grapevine Readers,

Some of you who are relatively new to St John's may not be aware that church members have been running an in-house short mat bowls team for the last 10 years which meets most Tuesday afternoons in the Church hall from 1.30 to 4.00pm.

an annual membership fee of £10 plus a weekly fee of £3.00.

There is a wide range of skill levels with women well represented. The games are fun with a competitive edge. For new or interested players training is available as is a set of bowls to use before making a commitment to join

functions are held to which all are invited and in addition competitions are held with other local clubs.

To add a little spice to the game there is a knockout annual competition amongst the members playing for the Les Pride shield, Les Pride was a long standing church member who was one of the founding fathers of the bowls club but is sadly no longer with us. Winning the shield is a real honour especially with the natural competitive



Membership is open to all church and non-church members, split 50:50, and the current membership is approximately 24 with an average of 14 to 18 playing every week on 3 mats. To pay for the hall rental and provide upgrades and new equipment there is

and purchase personal kit.

The club has a very warm and welcoming ethos together with a very strong social aspect including a break for tea or coffee and biscuits and a good chat. Summer and Christmas

spirit that exists and is held with pride by the many winners over the past years.

If you are interested do come along for a taster and a great afternoon of not too strenuous fun.

Stan Zirfas

Evangelists Conference 2020

Last year, Billy-Jo invited me to go to the 2020 Evangelists Conference. I looked at the link and did no more, although thoughts kept coming into my mind about going. Then eventually I sent an e-mail (in November) and to my surprise, it was fully booked! But God always has a plan; I received an e-mail to say that there was a cancellation. I was still unsure whether to go (a battle was going on). After having prayer with a wise friend, God's direction was to go. Billy-Jo drove to the hotel in Daventry, taking Mike Cosser and myself.

Over the next three days, we experienced RT Kendall, Jodie Collins, J John, Carrie Boren Headington, Benjamin John, and Greg Downes, telling us to go out into the world and preach the gospel, and present Jesus Christ to all. We are all called to love, but we must speak the truth. And through our prayer and devotion time



with God, the Holy Spirit will lead us. We see that self has taken over so many lives. Is there no fear of God? Benjamin John from Christian Concern

spoke about the watering down of the Gospel, which is seen in many areas of the world.

There were 200 Christians at the Conference, many with different ministries, reaching out to society, and others looking for direction from God.

With Noel Robinson leading our worship, the powerful preaching and teaching, of the word of God, prayer and prayer ministry, and the power of the Holy Spirit, we all were blessed by God.

There is another conference in January 2021, and if you feel called to go, please pray and discern.

We would love to talk about the experience with you. With love in Christ,

Janet Busby